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ABSTRACT

The variance in student work patterns between 1974 and 1981 is discussed, based on data from the Census Bureau's annual October Current Population Survey for a sample of about 155,000 individuals. The sample was weighted to represent the whole population of full-time students in 1974 and 1981 (excluding enrollments at proprietary, vocational, or other nontraditional institutions). Information is presented on the percentage of individuals who work and the number of work hours per week broken down for the following categories: income, gender, race, grade level, two-year and four-year schools, public or private control, urban and nonurban, region, and sector. It was found that students are more likely to work in 1981 than they were in 1974, and there has been no reduction in the hours worked weekly in 1981. Work continues to be a central activity of 40 percent of all full-time students, which supports the view that student aid has not replaced students' own efforts to finance their own education. In addition, there were increases in the rate of employment among women, blacks, lower income students, four-year college students, and private college students. (SW)

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WORK PATTERNS OF FULL-TIME COLLEGE STUDENTS IN 1974 AND 1981

Prepared for:

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I. Introduction

Students have traditionally worked to help pay for their education. The purpose of this paper is to describe the variance in work patterns between 1974 and 1981. This is an important period of time because of the increases in federal aid which have occurred. There is some concern that the introduction of easily available grants and loans could have diminished students willingness to work. Our results do not indicate either any diminishing of the proportion of students who work or a decline in the number of hours worked.

A second reason for investigating the patterns of student work is to determine if assumed student contribution levels in the needs analysis systems are realistic. Unfortunately, the data source used in the study does not contain income figures, so they must be imputed. Using the minimum wage of $3.25 an hour and a fifty week work year at 20 hours a week (just under the average that students reported working) students would gross $3,350 a year. In 1981, 40 percent of all full-time students reported working. This is an increase from just over 37 percent of students who worked in 1974.

II. Data Source and Definition of Terms

The data source used for the report is the October Current Population Survey (CPS) done annually by the Census Bureau. This is a sample of roughly 155,000 individuals. Information on work and education activity are included in the survey. The sample is weighted to represent the whole population. In 1974, CPS projected full-time enrollment of 6.3 million students. In 1981, this number rose to 7.6 million. The enrollment numbers do not include students in proprietary, vocational or in any other non-traditional educational settings.

The information about work reflects the student's work status during the October week the survey was performed. If a student worked during the summer and not during the week of the survey, that fact would not be captured by the results of this

survey. Because of this, we are probably underestimating the total student derived income from part-time work.

III. Results

The results are reported in two ways. The first is the proportion of individuals in a particular category who report working. This is expressed as a percentage. The second way in which results are reported is the number of hours worked in a week by those that reported working.

A. Work by Income Categories

The income categories have been corrected for inflation. The results indicate that the richest tend to work less than those in the middle and lower income range. This work-distribution is less evident in 1981, but still appears to be the case for those with over $50,000 in family income.

The hours worked has increased slightly since 1974. The number of hours worked does not vary much among the various income categories. The one or two hour differences reported can be accounted for by sampling error and rounding as easily as actual differences. Table 1 follows with the results.

B. Gender

In 1974, men were more likely to work than women. That difference had disappeared by 1981. There was no difference in the proportion of students working (40%). This leveling was achieved by an increase in the proportion of women working while men maintained the same proportion. There does appear to be a tendency for men who work to report working more hours a week than women. This gap narrowed in 1981. Table 2 presents the results.

C. Race

A greater proportion of white students (42%) report working than do members of other racial groups. Blacks report the lowest proportion of students working (28%). Other racial groups fall in between. These differences are the largest magnitude found in the report.

Table 1

Income Categories
(Reported in 1981 Dollars)

Income Categories	Percent of Students Working	
	1974	1981
$ 0 - 5,999	38.9%	41.1%
6,000 - 11,999	39.0	44.6
12,000 - 19,999	41.4	41.0
20,000 - 49,999	39.0	41.6
50,000 +	24.4	30.7

Income Categories	Hours per Week	
	1974	1981
$ 0 - 5,999	20	21
6,000 - 11,999	23	23
12,000 - 19,999	23	22
20,000 - 49,999	20	20
50,000 +	19	20

Table 2

Gender

Percent of Students Working

Gender	% Working 1974	% Working 1981
Male	39.7%	40.0%
Female	34.5	40.0
	Hours per Week	
Male	23	22
Female	18	19

Working black students, however, worked more hours than whites did in both years. The "other" racial group shows a significant increase in the hours worked between the two time periods. Table 3 follows with the results.

D. Grade Level

The higher the grade level, the more likely a student is to work. This is evident in both years. The proportion of students working in the first three academic years has increased since 1974 while the proportion of students working in the highest three academic levels has declined somewhat.

We assume that years 5 and 6 are graduate school level students. There is a peculiar variance at this level. Year 5 shows a dip relative to the years before and after. Year 6 indicates the highest proportion of students working. And they work more hours a week. We do not have a ready explanation for the depression in year 5. Table 4 contains all of the results.

E. Two-Year and Four-Year Schools

Students in two-year schools are much more likely to work than are students in four-year programs, although the gap has closed somewhat since 1974. Students in two-year schools worked more hours than did those in four-year schools. Again, the gap has narrowed since 1974. Table 5 contains the results.

F. Public or Private Control of Institutions

Students in public colleges work more than do those in private schools. The difference is roughly the same in 1981 as 1974. Students in both sectors show an increase in the proportion working. Students in public colleges worked more hours in 1974 than did private school students. The difference has almost disappeared in 1981. (Table 6.)

G. Urban and Non-Urban

There is the possibility that location may result in greater or lesser job opportunities. One point of interest is whether a student lives in a city area or not. It should be noted that the data is organized according to where one lives, and not necessarily to where one goes to school.

Table 3

Race

Percent of Students Working

Racial Category	% Working 1974	% Working 1981
White	39.0%	41.9%
Black	24.7	28.0
Other	33.5	30.4

Hours per Week

White	21	20
Black	25	24
Other	20	26

Table 4

Academic Year Level

Percent of Students Working

Academic Year Level	1974	1981
1	31.5%	33.4%
2	36.8	42.0
3	38.9	42.8
4	43.4	44.0
5	36.9	35.8
6+	48.7	46.7

Hours per Week

1	19	19
2	21	21
3	21	20
4	22	21
5	19	24
6+	24	25

Table 5

Two-Year/Four-Year Schools

Level of Institution	Percent of Students Working 1974	1981
Two-Year	47.2%	40.9%
Four-Year	31.7	37.3
	Hours per Week	
Two-Year	23	21
Four-Year	19	20

Table 6

Public and Private Institutional Control

Institutional Control	1974	1981
Percent of Students Aided		
Public	38.0%	40.9%
Private	35.9	37.3
Hours per Week		
Public	22	21
Private	19	20

There is very little difference reported for the proportion of students working or not working according to whether they live in a metropolitan area or not. There is no difference in the hours worked. These figures are reported in Table 7.

H. Region

In 1974 and 1981, students in the Northeast and South were less likely to work than were those in other regions. The proportion working in the Northeast increased sharply between 1974 and 1981, but it is still in the lower range. (Table 8.)

I. Sector

The students working were most likely to be employed in the private sector. Over 74 percent of the students reported working in the private sector while 23 percent worked for the Government. The remaining 2.5 percent reported being self-employed.

IV. Conclusions

Students are more likely to work in 1981 than they were in 1974. This would support the position that student aid has not replaced students' own efforts to finance their own education. There has been no reduction in the hours worked weekly. Work continues to be a central activity of a full forty percent of all full-time students.

The results indicate that the increases are in part due to an increase in the rate of employment among those elements of the student population that were less likely to work in 1974. For example, there were increases among women, blacks, lower income students, four-year college students, and private college students. Those population categories which had the highest proportion of students working in 1974 tended to remain roughly the same in 1981. For example, males, whites, graduate students, two-year college students, and public college students either showed a minimal gain or loss in the proportion of students working.

Table 7

Metropolitan Area or Not

Area	1974	1981
Percent of Students Working		
In Metropolitan Area	39.0%	40.3%
Out of Metropolitan Area	38.2	38.5
Hours per Week		
In Metropolitan Area	21	21
Out of Metropolitan Area	21	20

Table 8

Region of the Country

Percent of Students Aided

Region	1974	1981
Northeast	28.2%	37.6%
North Central	41.7	42.2
South	36.7	35.2
West	44.6	46.7

Hours per Week

Northeast	19	19
North Central	21	20
South	22	22
West	22	22

There are still large differences among various populations in terms of patterns of work. Students from wealthy families are less likely to work than others. Working blacks are likely to work more hours than whites yet blacks, as a whole, are less likely to work than are whites; and first-year students are less likely to work than students in their later academic years.

In general, there are reasonably consistent patterns of work between the two years (1974 and 1981) and among the different population divisions described in this paper. Work appears to be a constant source of income for full-time college students as well as a learning experience that supplements their more formal classroom education.